

Corvi Chronicle

Journal of the American Society of Crows and Ravens Vol. XX, No. 2, 2005 (C.E.)

CREATIONISM'S NEW LABEL

Who, what & why

In this country the basic premises of Creationism are approximately the same as they were in July of 1925 when William Jennings Bryan attempted, unsuccessfully, to defend them at the so-called Scopes Monkey trial. These premises are: Some 7,000 years ago the patriarchal Christian God created this world and its inhabitants including humans, the pious ones of whom remain the Apple of His Eye. Ever since, often making use of war, pestilence, flood, famine and other catastrophic devices, he has micro-managed this place miraculously intervening to punish heretics, heathens and others who aggravate him; or to reward very devout individuals, righteous nations, political parties, football teams and such. He is assisted in these works by preachers and priests of various sects to whom He has revealed what Man should be. Among His spokesmen there have been disputes, often violent ones, about the details but



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generally they are agreed that Man should be male, white, of western European descent, Christian and industrious. However, obedient and respectful females,

colored persons and other foreigners may be certified as honorary White Euro-Christian Males.

Except among the most gullible classes unadulterated – an expression – Creationism is now regarded as a Flat Earth fantasy devoid of both reason and supporting physical evidence. Presently the theory of Evolution is regarded as the most plausible explanation of how things became what they are and continue to change moment by moment. The basic Evolutionary premises are: Because of the composition of this planet a series of chemical/energetic reactions produced the first life forms.

During the next several billions of years they evolved into what we now have because of mutation, natural selection and adaptations to

Continued on page 2



DUMPSTERS *Input needed on changes in garbage collection*

Members of ASCAR have been observing three major Washington, D.C., Metro roosts since the Society's inception back in 1884. For the past 20 years or so, close attention has been paid to corvi behavior vis a vis refuse collection devices — aka “dumpsters” — especially behind food emporia in the inner suburbs.

In that time the waste management industry has made a major shift away from the open, egalitarian-type dumpster. That type, where anyone may make



Putting a lid on garbage collection. See online history http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garbage_truck

deposits or withdrawals, has nearly disappeared to be replaced by the armored, sealed, locked and loaded, homeland secure type, to which only functionaries of the depositing and hauling businesses have access.

Open dumpsters and the inevitable overflow from them were seemingly a

major food source for crows in the Washington, D.C., area. All of which raises several interesting (we think) questions. Are dumpsters in your area being made more secure, i.e. less accessible for scavenging crows? If so what if any effect has this had on foraging habits of the birds, i.e. are city flocks dispersing, going elsewhere?

Observations, speculations, and even solid data on the subject will be appreciated.

REPLY TO:

#882

6598 WILLIAMSBURG RD.
ARLINGTON VA 22213

WHO,WHAT & WHY continued

Fear of observation & reason

their organic and inorganic environment. The process is an ever-continuing one and therefore change is constant. As to the First Cause, the planetary trigger mechanism: This may be called, as reasonably as anything else, "super-Natural" since the nature of any such phenomenon is clearly beyond present human powers to comprehend or imagine. Since it undercuts their credentials as explainers of the origins and nature of this world, Evolutionary theory outrages Creationists, most especially their preachers and priests.

Inadequate, to put it politely, as pure Creationism is, it has long and strongly appealed to oligarchs and autocrats who are in charge of worldly affairs and ambitious of remaining so. The appeal is: Man should behave according to an orderly Master Plan, provisions of which have been revealed to a select few mortal Shepherds. Because the plan has been revealed to them by the Highest Authority there is no need for others to examine the Shepherd's claims or seek physical proof of them. In fact doing so is somewhat blasphemous. Members of the Flock should avoid questioning and carping about what we are doing and where we are going. These larger navigational decisions should be left to the Shepherds, secular and religious.

Pure Creationism has become difficult for many of the Flock to swallow. Therefore sophisticated Shepherds have recently concocted an additive intended to make the old snake oil a more palatable antidote for Evolution. They sell this additive Intelligent Design. The basic premises of Intelligent Design are: There remain certain gaps in the physical evidence which is offered in support of Evolutionary theory. These missing links, so to speak, negate the large body of evidence which demonstrates that the evolutionary process is responsible for past and present life forms. Secondly, IDers argue that no matter how many billions of years are involved it is mathematically impossible for mutation, natural selection and adaptation to have produced so many complex life forms. If Evolution is not largely or at all responsible for what is here then something else must be. Ergo an Intelligent Designer. He may have taken longer than the Bible reports to make this place. And perhaps Evolution served as a tool for some of the smaller jobs, say putting rings on the tails of raccoons. But the overall planning and most complicated creations are the work

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of the Intelligent Designer who can and will at times conduct miraculous interventions and make whatever changes suit him.

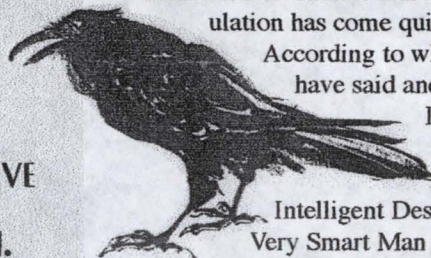
IDers offer no physical evidence that supports these claims or, for that matter, disproves those of Evolutionists. For example: The calculations used to suggest that mutation and natural selection could not possibly produce the life forms of this world have been shown to be flawed and specious by a number of professional mathematicians. As for the it's-all-wrong-because-there-are-missing-links argument: In less than a century and a half an impressive amount of physical evidence supporting (and none disproving) Evolutionary theory has been accumulated. Considering how long it took for us to figure out that the earth is round and circles the sun, the general vindication of Charles Darwin's speculation has come quickly.

According to what they have said and written, IDers seem to think of the

Intelligent Designer as a Very Smart Man with strong engineering credentials.

(The possibility that He may be an arts and crafts hobbyist, a sadist, or even she is seldom discussed.) Since ordinarily smart men do, this Very Smart Man must have had a serious purpose in mind. He did. It was and is to make a domain for Man (of the certifiable Creationist sort) to live piously and prosper.

In short, Intelligent Design is not a scientific theory that is reasoned speculation flowing from the examination of natural reality. Rather it is an effort to intelligently design a new label for the old Creationism, which at its foundations is supported only by revelation. By itself the Very Smart Man scenario might be dismissed simply as ungodly hubris. Unfortunately ID has been enthusiastically seized on by the larger Creationist community (a significant one numerically and politically) as a tool for discrediting, especially in the public schools, both Evolution and the scientific method that is responsible for Evolutionary theory. It is well to remember that those who value observation and reason; who make use of these human faculties to study, cope with and enjoy the world have always threatened the authority of Revelationists and been an anathema for them. — Corvi 43



REBUTTLE

Pseudo-Sophistries exposed by Design

The decision of Chronicle editors to publish the scurrilous and subversive nonsense of 43 is deplored. However, we welcome the opportunity to refute scientifically this communistic, elitist cant. Observation and reason which the corruptive 43 professes to value so highly, provide numerous, worldly examples of Intelligent Design. Though only a few of them can be mentioned in this space, they should suffice to demonstrate the errors of the anonymous 43 and his (or, quite possibly, her) ilk.

* American crows and other higher animals are sexually active for only a few weeks each year. Man and many women have been Designed to be in heat 24/365.

* Perhaps apes did descend from trees. But Elisha Graves Otis invented the elevator in 1861.

* It has been scientifically proven that the tale about Aphrodite rising from the foam of the sea is a ludicrous myth. So, it obviously must be, are suggestions that the ancestors of Tomas Torquemada, Robert E. Lee, Paris Hilton and many others emerged from the salt water.

* Socrates was poisoned. Saladin was bisexual. Sitting Bull surrendered. All three were heathens.

* Because of Intelligent Design we do not, as we might if evolution had its way, do a lot of dumb, ugly things such as trying to get blood out of a turnip or making silk purses out of sow's ears.

* The crows of New Caledonia are



RECENT ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS,
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A HARD DAY OF WORK.

known to make primitive tools. However the gross national product of New Caledonia is much less than that of Gary, Indiana.

* Men (at least good American ones) have been Designed to live approximately seven times longer than dogs. Thus Man must housebreak seven puppies and grieve seven times for the loss of his best friend. On the other hand, a box turtle is known to have lived 127 years but is not thought to have ever had an affectionate relationship with Man.

* The telephone did not evolve. Alexander Graham Bell thought it up in 1876 and got a patent on the instrument in 1877.

* The question of why do we have by

Design cockroaches and termites is sometimes raised. The answer is Tom DeLay.

* Why are there no more dinosaurs, saber-toothed tigers or giant sloths? Smart men are objectively self-critical. It follows that a Very Smart Man would be Very aware of His mistakes.

* Recent archeological finds, hydrological extrapolation, DNA testing and many well-regarded oral histories indicate that 7,012 years ago the Intelligent Designer roused Raven and assigned the great bird a hard day of work. Early on the morning of the First day, Raven snatched this world out of the jaws of the Evil One. Raven spent the rest of the morning making the ponds, lakes and rivers by filling natural declivities with fresh water, which he carried in an enormous calabash. In the afternoon he flew over the oceanic basins and by pissing in them filled them with salt water. In the evening Raven located the first People who were cowering under a huge clamshell. To encourage and inspirit them, he sang, danced and told several rousing stories. When the People became a bit bolder, Raven — using several of the women — demonstrated how they could copulate and in consequence reproduce. Then, bone-tired, Raven returned to the Intelligent Designer who praised the bird for his ingenuity and industriousness and granted him certain honors in reward.

Such evidence cannot be ignored. Unlike the sly, secular 43, I am proud to identify myself as

*Dr. B. Jennings Plouth, PhD (earned)
Professor of Cultural Dogmatics
Corvi College, Sand Flat, Neb.*

ASCAR now numbers — so think some who enjoy counting things — about 1,000 members. Alphabetically and in terms of interests and attitudes members range — an expression — from academics to Zoroastrians. But only the Editor and an associate minion know who and where they all are. This is in keeping with the Corvi Privacy Act that forbids those who know from talking about or to other corvis or using their names and addresses in

Privacy act

the Chronicle without permission. The CPA is occasionally tested by purveyors of crow curios wanting access to mailing lists.

However, because many members have similar interests and have indicated a desire to make the acquaintance of others who share them, some thought has been given to adjusting the CPA to

accommodate these wishes. Therefore anyone who would like to hear from other corvi should send along their name and address to the editor. These will be published occasionally in the Chronicle. Names are not absolutely necessary — Corvi numbers will do — but addresses are. Obviously those who wish to remain known only to the editor and her associate minion should do nothing and will continue to enjoy the protection of CPA.

BOOKs

Exhibit to launch artist's new book

Evon Zerbetz, the Ketchikan, Alaska, artist who has delighted Chronicle readers in many previous issues with her whimsical linocuts of crows and ravens, tells us she has a new book due out in August this year: *Ten Rowdy Ravens*.

Written by Susan Ewing, the story tells of one day's excellent adventure for 10 ravens. It is illustrated with 26 new raven linocuts by Zerbetz. The publisher is Alaska Northwest Books.

"Ten ravens set out on a lark. As the pages turn, they steal pretty pearls, picnic in a pickup truck, and pull a predator's tail.

"Scenarios are fanciful but rooted in ravenhood: collecting shiny things, testing curious objects, getting into garbage and showing off. The adventures take their numbers down to 1, and they reunite to play the game all over again."

She is launching her new book with a special exhibit "RAUCOUS! Everything Raven" in the Tongass Historical Museum in Ketchikan from Oct. 14 through Jan. 29, 2006.

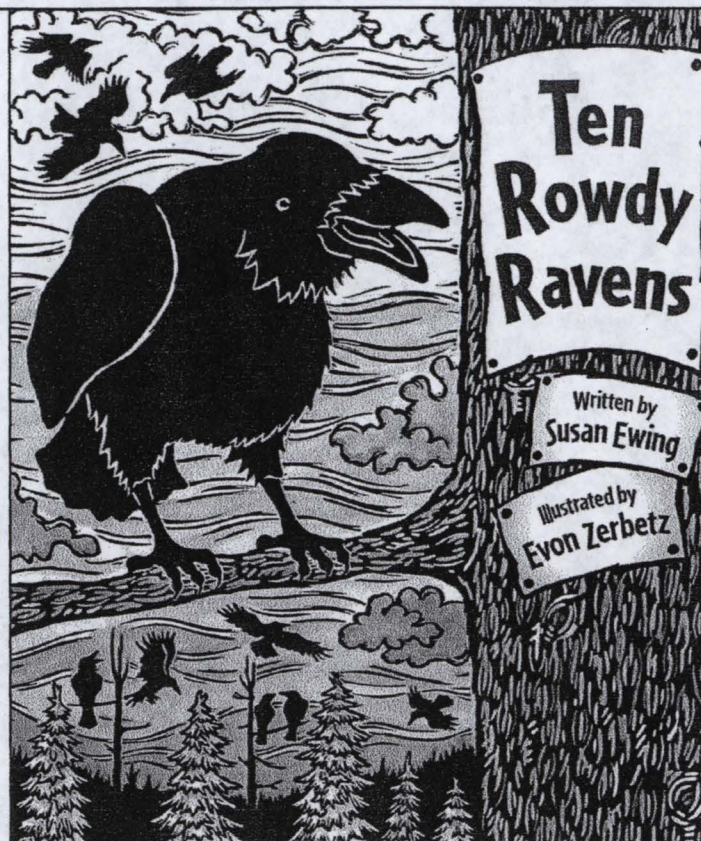
"I am avidly collecting fresh raven anecdotes for this exhibit which will rely heavily on personal stories from folks," Zerbetz asks if Chronicle readers would send raven anecdotes for possible use in the exhibit. She will credit any stories she uses.

Zerbetz notes that "raven imagery has flown in and out" of her artwork since she made her first marks with a carving knife into a piece of wood 17 years ago.

Drawing on the anecdotal and factual the exhibit will feature Zerbetz's whimsy, wit and curiosity about the corvid family. The 26 linocuts from "Ten Rowdy Ravens" along with some new mixed media artworks by Zerbetz will be among the interactive and educational displays.

One interactive piece she is creating is a giant raven board game, where players move large raven game pieces striving to collect cache points. The colorful game board invites players to "start anywhere" to embark on the fast-paced game.

Other exhibits may include a giant raven nest tucked in an alcove and lined with the



ubiquitous raven collectibles. One wall will feature a photo essay of an experiment that attempts to answer the question: Do ravens show a preference for a favorite snack food: Cheese Puffs, Potato Chips or French Fries?

Zerbetz will explore the widespread appearance of ravens in lore and myth throughout the world on a wall called Ten Famous Ravens, which will be framed by raven caryatids perched atop ionic columns.

For those living in or visit-

ing Ketchikan or Anchorage during the next few months, Zerbetz has lined up book signings as well as the "RAUCOUS!" exhibit.

A booksigning is scheduled Dec. 2 at the Holiday Art Walk, Soho Coho, in Ketchikan.

In Anchorage, Artique will exhibit art from *Ten Rowdy Ravens* from Oct. 22 to Nov. 3, with a book signing on Saturday, Oct. 29.

To view more of her new linocuts online, visit: evonzerbetz.com.



Detail of "Flying with the Dragon," one of 26 hand-colored linocuts by Evon Zerbetz for *Ten Rowdy Ravens*.

CALL FOR RAVEN ANECDOTES

Evon Zerbetz is collecting raven anecdotes for possible use in an exhibit opening Oct. 14 in the Tongass Historical Museum in Ketchikan, Alaska. She invites Chronicle readers to send her anecdotes before Sept. 15 and will credit any she uses.

Send to:

evon@evonzerbetz.com

or

EVON ZERBETZ

P.O. Box 8943

KETCHIKAN, AK 99901



THE TALK OF THE ROOST

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Corvi 76, New Preston, Conn., reminds us that crows inspired an as yet unperformed opera by Lewis Spratlan. 76 sent a March 6, 2005, N.Y. Times clipping of Anthony Tommasini's review of Spratlan's new CD "When Crows Gather and Other Works."

Tommasini described Spratlan's work as a "spiky modern musical language" prompting the headline: "A Spiky Opera Inspired by Crows Outside a Window."

He wrote that the recording's "nine interconnected vignettes about winter, scored for an unusual sextet (three clarinets, violin, cello and piano), was inspired by black crows outside Mr. Spratlan's studio. The din of the squawking birds is conveyed through music at once comical and grating. In an Ivesian touch, evocations of a Protestant hymn and a bit of a rag are deftly folded into the musical fabric."

Tommasini concludes the "recording should spread the word about Mr. Spratlan's music. Might it also inspire some company to produce his opera?"

POPOWSKI HAUNTS

Corvi 29, Silver Spring, Md., called our attention to "Crow Shooting," a book written by Bert Popowski and comically illustrated by Gordon Elliott.

We checked online for more information about Popowski and learned among other things that although his book was

published in 1946, it remains copyrighted. Popowski's book appears to be revered and often quoted by those who make sport of shooting crows.

Born in North Dakota, Popowski's career ranged from high school principal to an associate editor of Look magazine. From 1951 until his death in 1982, he worked as a freelance writer best known for his books, articles and photographs on hunting and outdoor life.

His papers are archived at the Hilton M. Briggs Library at South Dakota State University. The archives notes: "In his earlier years, he was best known as an expert varmint hunter. Several of his books did much to popularize this form of hunting. In 1932, he built a log cabin near the Narrows on French Creek in Custer State Park. There he weathered the Great Depression and did most of his writing. In 1949 he won the National Crow Shooting Championship, using calls of his own design"

AUBURN CROW SHOOT

Speaking of shooting crows, Corvi 655 in Canandaigua, N.Y., sent an undated Associated Press report on an attempt by the Humane Society of the United States to stop the 2005 annual February crow hunt in Auburn, N.Y. State environmental conservation officials reported that they and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service monitor the contest to assure that hunters don't bait crows in the roost that attracts thousands of birds.

About a week before the hunt com-

menced, state and federal scientists used hand-held lasers, pyrotechnics and amplified crow distress calls to harass and scatter the roost. Officials estimated they reduced the roost by about 60 percent.

In 2004 the crow-shooting contest attracted more than 200 hunters, some from Kentucky and Arizona, and killed 1,061 crows. Money raised by the contest is donated to a local needy family, the story reported.

A Washington Post clipping on the Auburn hazing incident submitted by Corvi 57 of Gaithersburg, Md., noted that at the height of winter in Auburn, crows outnumber human residents 2 to 1. "Auburn's mayor took pains to tell the AP that he had nothing against [crows]. 'They are beautiful creatures, and we don't want to hurt them. ... We wish them well - just somewhere else.'"

HOT CROW, COLD CASH

We found another clipping from 57 from a Gaithersburg Aug. 12, 2001, paper reporting that a crow flying into an electricity substation in Rock Forest, Quebec, had caused an explosion and ultimately performed a civic duty. In addition to finding the remains of an electrocuted crow, officers found a hidden rucksack containing "thousands and thousands of dollars believed to have been robbed from the Banque National de Rock Forest."

"Without the crow's sacrifice," police spokesman Andre Lemire said, "we would never have recovered the money."

ROOST NOTES ... intelligence reports

INTELLIGENCE

Reaching back, we found two 1999 clippings from the Ellsworth American in Maine of "Tarr & Feathers" columns by Clyde Tarr both on the wisdom of crows and ravens. In one, Tarr offered three crow and raven intelligence tales sent or phoned in by his readers.

One told of three crow hunters who entered a blind and waited several hours for a murder of crows to leave their perch high in a nearby tree. Out of patience, coffee and sandwiches two of the hunters finally left the blind. But until the third hunter got in his pickup truck, the crows never moved. As the third hunter drove away, the crows flew from their perch, cawing and free-wheeling in the trail of the pickup's dust on the road. The hunters concluded: the crows could count. At least to three, Tarr added.

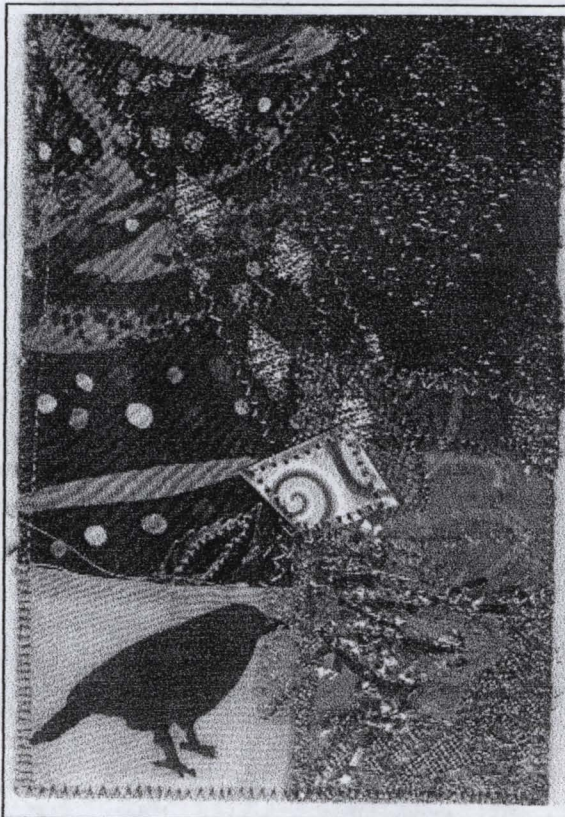
A Trenton, Maine, reader provided Tarr with an example of ravens solving a problem better than crows. He had observed both crows and ravens attempting to retrieve a suet bag hanging by a string from a tree branch. A crow repeatedly reached for the string, took it in his beak and raised it as high as he could but each time he attempted to eat with his beak, the bag slipped away of course. A raven, however, grasped the string in his beak and used his claw to step on and hold the string as he gradually pulled the suet bag closer to his perch. Eventually the raven was able to sample the suet.

An Ellsworth resident offered proof that ravens talk amongst themselves before dining. At his camp cabin, he placed some salt pork on the dock and waited on the screened porch of the cabin for ravens to claim the salt pork. Three ravens landed on the dock and before any began to eat the salt pork there was considerable cawing and cackling among them! Tarr's take: they were saying a prayer of thanks.

RECOGNIZING RESEARCHERS

More raven intelligence anecdotes come from two clippings of AP reporter Dan Joling's story on a raven research project at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

Stacia Backensto, a doctoral student in biology and wildlife



Stitched Caw-d by Karen Van Hoy aka #820, textile artist, from Crow Magic Studio, Beaverton, Ore. The caw-d is part of a post card swap series called "If I were a Crow" and features swatches of shiny fabric, a metallic leaf and a flashy piece of a hologram.

enrolled in the university's Regional Resilience and Adaptation Program, is studying the interaction of ravens and oil field workers on Alaska's treeless North Slope.

"They're savvy creatures, and sometimes for me it was a question of who's going to be studied today," Backensto told the reporter. "Are they studying me or I studying them? Who's in charge of this situation?"

"To understand their behavior and try to observe their behavior and not be a part of changing their behavior is very tricky...."

"The main motivation for this research is that there are predators on the North Slope that for all purposes can be called subsidized predators," Backensto told the reporter. She noted that scavenging species including grizzly bears, the arctic fox and glaucous gulls could benefit from human activity.

Little data was recorded on raven populations on the North Slope before oil drilling began there. A 1987 Christmas bird count at the Prudhoe Bay landfill was the first indication that raven numbers were increasing.

Oil field activity offered not only new food sources but nesting opportunities, Backensto said. Ravens lay and incubate eggs long before the snow melts on the North Slope, often in temperatures 30 degrees below zero. They nest in structures at least 23 feet off the ground. The North Slope has only a few river bluffs with that height but the oil rigs and buildings provide new niches. Oil drilling also provides nesting materials otherwise scarce on the treeless range.

"They're relying on industrial materials – welding rods, plastic cable ties, copper wire, survey stakes, anything that's laying around as scrap that they can get their hands on, they use," Backensto told the reporter.

Further, with the human activity in the oil fields, the ravens needn't rely on whatever prey they can scavenge before the snows melt. Ravens are particularly adept at knowing when cargo planes arrive with food shipments and of course when dump trucks collect garbage.

Backensto is impressed with the ravens' sense of time. "They won't be out there all day, and then five minutes before the plane is scheduled to land, the ravens come in and they're

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AROUND THE CORVID WORLD

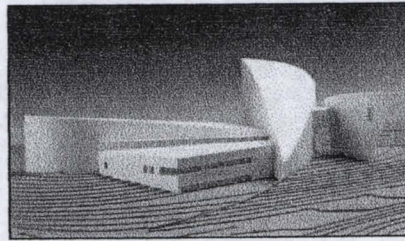
Corvid insurrections

 Believe it or Not (in some cases NOT)

RAVEN 'GRAVITTI'

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA – Expanding the Museum of the North at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks has been underway for several years. The architectural centerpiece is a five-story edifice of somewhat free-form, trapezoidal shape, of glass and gleaming white exterior panels. The project has caused considerable controversy because of cost overruns and objections to the unusual design. However, these problems have paled, so to speak, this spring when compared to those presented by ravens who at times seem as abundant in Fairbanks as pigeons in southern cities and display much more attitude.

Briefly these birds have commenced playfully ripping out the silicone caulking from the panels; then contemptuously and copiously defecating on them. This has touched off a squabble – which promises to soon become a legal one – between the university, contractors and insurance companies as to who will pay to repair the raven damage. As yet there are no firm estimates but the cost is expected to be substantial, perhaps in the millions because the shape of the building requires the erection of a sizeable scaffolding to allow workers to replace the caulking and clean the panels. Furthermore there seems to be a good chance that this will be an annual – year after year – chore. Dan Gibson, the bird collection manager at the Museum, has been quoted in the *Fairbanks Daily*



A model of the University of Alaska Museum's new addition that opened this year. <http://www.uaf.edu/museum/expand/index.html>

News-Miner as saying that the ravens “like the tall structure with sharp edges on the crest of the hill because of the effect it has on the wind.”

Gibson went on to say that when winter flocks break up and ravens begin to pair off for breeding they are just looking to have some fun. “The only possible thing anyone could do to deter them from their fun,” Gibson remarks, “would be to change the shape of the building.” (To date neither the use of owl decoys nor loud noisemakers have deterred or seemingly left much of an impression on the ravens.)

The Museum skirmish is not the first or only instance of ravens retaliating against the invasion of their native Fairbanks turf. Playfully or vengefully the big birds regularly rip windshield wipers off cars and trucks. Several years ago they began pulling the insulation off a satellite mounted on the roof of the Fairbanks Geophysical Institute. On the other hand they provide the city with significant garbage disposal service,

being recompensed only in kind.

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JIGGY JOG

LONDON, ENGLAND (from the *Evening Standard*) – Justin Keay is the father of two and a frequent jogger in Battersea Park. On June 28, 2005, while jogging in the park he was attacked by what he described as two “massive” crows who looked “really menacing.” Keay was correct at least so far as behavior of the birds was concerned. While he attempted to fend them off the birds struck him on the head and neck. When the jogger finally drove them away his T-shirt was “drenched with blood.” Keay reported the incident to park police who gave him antiseptic wipes and sent him to a hospital for an anti-tetanus injection. A local nature center suggested that the crows were defending nearby fledglings and advised Keay and others to jog elsewhere.

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EU CRISIS

HAMBURG, GERMANY (based on an Associated Press report of April 28, 2005) – This spring more than 1,000 toads have puffed up and exploded in and around a pond in Hamburg. There have been reports of the same thing happening in Denmark. Witnesses describe the scene as being comparable to one in a horror movie as the bloated amphibians inflate like balloons and then suddenly burst. Frank Mutschmann, a

Continued on page 8

ROOST NOTES *continued*

Raven to researcher: ‘Take a hike!’

by the runway and they wait. What happens is, they unload crates of food off the plane and the ravens immediately descend upon these crates of food and start ripping open the packages to get at the food.”

The ravens seem to time the shift changes and scout for food dropped by workers. At Kuparuk, they follow the dump trucks like clockwork, Backensto said. The trucks – and the ravens – arrive at a certain time of day and a certain time of night, Backensto observed, “and [the ravens] know which pickups to

follow.”

Backensto is most impressed with the ravens’ ability to pick her out on the landscape as she works to trap and place wing tags or transmitters on the ravens. Sensing that the ravens tend to ignore oil field workers, she has borrowed overalls and a hard hat. Nonetheless she says the ravens recognize her face.

One raven clearly told her to back off. The researchers had trapped the bird’s mate and put a radio transmitter on her. “We didn’t even trap him...[He] chased us off the pad for a mile.”

REMEMBERING INKY

To Whom it May Concern:

In Vol. XVI, No. 1, 2002, there was a mention of a story "Inky's Fate Rests with Feds, Dec. 19, 2001," by Laura Ricketson.

A federal decision was expected in March after the article, which I guess, would be 2002. Does anyone putting together the Chronicle know what happened to the crow?

The interesting article kind of left me hanging for some sort of closure one way or the other. Thanks for your consideration of the matter. -- #05 Rockville, Md.

Editor's Note: We lost contact with our Inky informant, perhaps a reader will kindly update the story.

VIEW FROM NOVA SCOTIA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been interested in birds most of my life and now crows and ravens in particular. My wife and I live on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean on an inlet named Petpeswick Inlet which is situated about 25 miles from the city of Halifax on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia.

We feed many birds here, especially seagulls, crows and ravens. Many morn-

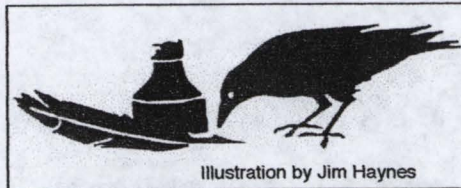


Illustration by Jim Haynes

LETTERS

ings are spent at the living room window watching the birds feeding on leftover food that we put out for them. We both enjoy the antics of crows and ravens and never tire of watching them.

I would like to become a member of ASCAR and receive the Chronicle, please. -- # 1620 Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia

5 HOODED CROWS

Thank you so much for the recent edition of the Corvi Chronicle. It makes me happy whenever I see it. I enclose \$, which isn't much to some, but to a crow might actually be useful.

In Berlin we're blessed with a variety of corvidae - magpies, the hooded crow, European jays (wow! So many colors!) and perhaps others hidden in the folds of leaves and amongst the pines in and

around our city. I'm a city dweller at the moment, so my closest corvid friends are a small family of five hooded crows. This group spends part of its day opposite our fourth-floor apartment on the roof of a Turkish supermarket. Water pools on the Oz-Gida's broad roof in every season except late summer, provided these hooded scavengers with a meeting, playing, eating and bathing place. They harass local pigeons, steal from Oz-Gida's trash and make a pleasant racket calling to each other. Better than TV.

Looking forward to more news from ASCAR. -- #17 Berlin, Germany

REAR WINDOW

Greetings!

I thought you might find interesting an observation of "Crow as Predator" that I noticed from my bedroom window looking out into the backyard a couple of years ago. I was watching a crow sitting on the back fence, intently cocking its head and studying the ground below it. Naturally, I grabbed my binoculars to (hopefully) see what held its interest so strongly. Just as I focused, it jumped down to the ground, stabbed it hard with

Continued on next page

AROUND THE CORVID WORLD *continued*

Corvid Insurrections Lynchburg's unrenowned crow history (maybe)

Berlin scientist, explains that this is being caused by crows who peck out the livers of their victims.

"Crows are clever," Mutschmann was quoted as saying, "They learn quickly from watching other crows how to get the livers."

When attacked, toads often respond by puffing up to make themselves appear more formidable. But when crows, paying no heed to this defensive behavior, remove the liver, the lungs and blood vessels burst and the toad deflates. The question here is: why have crows started doing this in a few locations in northern Europe? An EU crisis.

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POPPER WHOPPER

LYNCHBURG, VA. — Kipp Teague and Owen Grubb have created an entertaining website on the history (maybe,

maybe not) of the Lynchburg area. Included have been accounts of a colony of 35 gorillas who escaped from a circus train and took up residence in local woodlands. They harassed domestic animals and people in the area, sometimes playing and defecating on rooftops. There was at least one instance of an ape stealing a truck. Teague and Grubb report that the electric cross, an improved version of the electric chair, was invented in Lynchburg. Also just south of a local mall there is an installation used by NASA to periodically correct the Earth's rotational speed. Etc. etc. etc.

Of special interest to Chronicle readers is The Great Popcorn Blizzard of '58, a condensed version of which runs as follows. In the late 1950s Stuart Pittman, a Lynchburg businessman and father of local basketball star Dwayne

"Pitter-Patter" Pittman, invented a process for mass-producing a superior buttered popcorn. It soon was being distributed throughout the eastern United States. Unfortunately in 1958 an explosion of hot butter blew up the large Pittman Popcorn factory. Oily popcorn rained down on Lynchburg covering most of the downtown with six inches of the greasy stuff. Soon thousands of crows moved in on what was for them a treasure trove. However most of them choked on popcorn or were mutilated in the feeding frenzy. City road crews spent three days collecting crow carcasses. They were trucked just outside the city and covered with dirt and lime. This crow mound can still be seen in the thickets near the intersection of Rt. 460, the Concord Turnpike.

LETTERS *continued*

its beak, flung something back and forth a couple of times and came back up to the fence with a mole!! Deciding the mole was sufficiently subdued enough; he flew up to a tree branch where he devoured it. I also witnessed a blue jay display similar behavior, only instead of a mole, it attacked and killed a newly flying sparrow baby at my bird feeder.

Please accept the enclosed small donation as thanks for your wonderful newsletter – it always brings a smile to my face when I see it in the mailbox. -- #42 Falls Church, Va.

URBAN CROW INSPIRATION

Dear Friends,
Been meaning to, finally Urban Crow and this music review [see Talk of the Roost] inspired me to; attached is my contribution for this out of the ordinary chronicle.

I still laugh when I look at Urban Crow in the winter/spring edition. It is so true, so true! — #76 New Preston, Conn.

RAVENS TOUCH SPIRIT

In the last issue of the Corvi Chronicle was printed a poem I liked very much by Eugene Beckes, "The Wild Ravens." He has a wonderful insight into the passion, mystery and beauty behind the life of Ravens. No other creature seems to move the spirit like Raven can. Keep up the good work on the Chronicle.-- #1049, Alto, N.M.

INSPIRING ART

Thanks once again for the FINE publication! My own visiting crows come by the

feeding station I set up for them (about six years ago) nearly every morning. They continue to inspire my artwork in often-unexpected ways. ...Maybe these birds are trying to tell me stories ... I no longer question or look for reasons, I just show up and see what happens here in my studio.

Best to you; Keep up the good work.
— #112 Los Gatos, Calif.

REHABILITATOR CONCERNS

Please accept my apologies for not meeting my financial responsibilities sooner. Thank you and keep up the good work. I must say that I have mixed feelings about reading the stories about people keeping "pet" crows. As a wildlife rehabilitator I see the sad results of poor care and bad nutrition when these birds are not kept properly. I do not want to be hypocritical about this – I keep a crow legally as an education bird that I took in after just such poor care. I am able to enjoy the company of this bird also because the bird was allowed to completely socialize to humans. So I can enjoy her company, but, due to her predilection for people, she also enjoys my company. -- # 623 Middleburgh, N.Y.

DIRTY 30s WILDLIFE

Been wondering for some years now about those truckloads of dead crows going East on highway 50 past Rozel, Kan., in the 1930s. We, my friends in school and I, guessed and kidded, "They're headed for New York dinner tables." That was Depression. Things were hard but we weren't hungry.

I became a Master Gardener in 1997 learning about IPM (integrated pest management). Now the question is did that devastating grasshopper crop follow the

trucks of dead crow year?

The year jack rabbits were so plentiful they crowded the cow's water tanks for spills and even dug up the sugar beets to eat followed the big coyote hunt, I believe. — #1932, Silver Spring, Md.

DIFFERENTLY MINDED

I found your site and it's great – the subject, the attitude—it sums up something I can't put in words.

I've always been fascinated by crows and ravens. I watched their behavior when young and thought: there's someone like me. Over the years, crows have led me to some of my best nature sightings. And when my mother died and we spread her ashes, a raven flew over us a few times giving its non-croak cry. Some family members said it was a bad omen, but Mom would have liked it.

For years, as a hobby, I've been writing a humorous/philosophical story about the end of the world, in which two sarcastic, talking, cosmic crows play a major part. As a mind, your group fits with what I see and think about them.

The other day I was out birding and approached an unusual call I was hearing, in a small wood across a field. A man stood up – he had a raven call (not very accurate) and he was using it to call in and shoot crows. It's funny that he called me in instead.

Researching crow hunting on the net, after that incident, I found your site (as well as Crowbusters, with its page of unusually colored crows). So I am asking to join your esteemed company, to enjoy the multifaceted thoughts and writings of other members and to cast my lot with the differently minded. — #1225 Nazareth, Pa. (Where there are lots of Great Horned owls to harass day and night.)

THE CORVI CHRONICLE is published irregularly by corvi who have an interest in or need for doing so for members of The American Society of Crows and Ravens and others. There is no subscription fee, but it is customary and seems to send contributions to pay for production and mailing. There is a direct connection between contributions, the size of the Chronicle and its frequency of distribution. Those who do not choose to contribute will continue to receive the Chronicle and enjoy all membership privileges. However, they will no doubt suffer a loss of self-esteem and may occasionally be mocked by other corvis.

Members are reminded to make new corvi by duplicating and passing along issues of the Chronicle.

ASCAR has a Web page : <http://www.ascaronline.org/>

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New West Nile study looks at robin

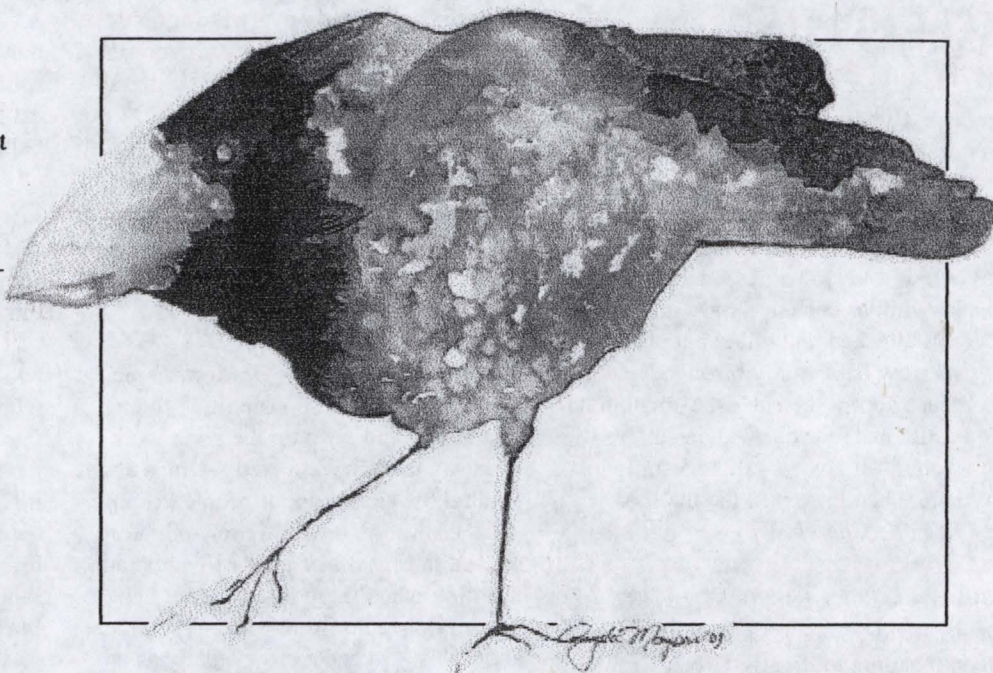
A July 29 Associated Press report from Hartford, Conn., on the source of West Nile disease comes from a study at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station identifying the common American Robin as a major source.

A DNA study of blood extracted from 300 mosquitoes trapped in Connecticut over the past three years found that 40 percent fed on the common American Robin and only 1 percent on crows.

Theodore Andreadis, chief medical entomologist for Connecticut, has submitted his findings to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for publication in the agency's journal "Emerging Infectious Diseases."

Although the results were similar to a study at North Carolina State University, a leading West Nile researcher, Nick Komar, who had not read the findings, cautioned against concluding crows were not an important source. "If this study analyzes mosquitoes where there are lots of robins but no crows, that could be misleading.

"What mosquitoes feed on is a very complicated and very large puzzle. We need more data," Komar said.



Watercolor by Angela Mayson, aka #394, Lake Havasu City, Ariz. In full color, Mayson's fanciful crow is a prismatic blend of colors.

ART NOTES

This issue features work sent by watercolor artist Angela Mayson, above; artist and illustrator Evon Zerbetz (see page 4) of Ketchikan, Alaska; textile artist Karen Van Hoy (see page 6) of Beaverton, Ore.; and the late brush-painter Nancy Rupp whose studio was in Ojai, Calif. A few years

before her untimely death, Rupp had provided *The Chronicle* with a handful of sketches and a couple of photographs of crows and ravens. Three of her raven sketches appear with the articles on Creationism and Intelligent Design on pages 1, 2 and 3.

CORVI CHRONICLE

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